



Questions and Answers (Treatment)

Q. Is there a cure for HIV/AIDS?

A. No. There is no cure or vaccine for HIV/AIDS. There is treatment available for those who are living with HIV/AIDS so as to make their lives healthier and longer.

Q. What is HIV/AIDS treatment?

A. Treatment for HIV/AIDS has been developed, the first in 1986. Today there are many types of treatments, however none are a cure. Most popular today is the HAART: High Active Anti-Retroviral Treatment. Another commonly known treatment is Nevirapine, a cheap treatment used to help prevent transmissions from mother-to-child.

Q. Why are there so many different treatments?

A. HIV is a virus that is always changing. Just like other sicknesses, it is changing all the time. As the virus changes the treatments become less effective. If we imagine that the virus has the shape of a regular pineapple but sometimes we see other shapes of pineapples, for example with two tops. This small change might alter the way the something acts, in the case of HIV it may make the treatment no longer effective. Additionally, HIV is making these small changes very quickly and all the time. The development that the virus makes when it overcomes the treatment is called resistance. Resistance to treatment is one of the greatest problems in treatment, and is also the reason why so many types of treatments have been developed in the last two decades.

Q. Can the treatments hurt you?

A. Treatments do have downsides. Above, resistance was mentioned. Another is the side-effects of treatment, such as nausea. Treatments also have difficult schedules, such as food requirements and odd hourly demands. However, HIV/AIDS treatment has been called the as giving the "Lazarus effect." Lazarus is person from the New Testament who Jesus brought back to life after he had died. Many people see these treatments giving new life to people almost near death. Treatments are sometimes difficult to take and are not problem-free, but they are a great option for people living with HIV/AIDS, a longer life also means fewer orphaned children.

Q. What is the role of cost?

A. Cost plays a very large role in the debate over treatment. Originally the treatments were very expensive, only the wealthy could afford them. Changes have occurred since 2001 that have made treatments cheaper, however they still are quite costly – about \$280 per year.